

The Abbey Precinct

Temporary Precinct

Once a suitable site had been identified on which the abbey was to be established, and approved by the General Chapter, certain buildings of necessity were to be constructed before the new abbot could take residence, in order that the new community could straightaway serve God and live there in keeping with the Rule. These buildings were the oratory - where the monks prayed, the monks' dormitory - where the monks slept, the monks' refectory - where the monks ate, the lay brothers' dormitory - where the lay brothers slept, the lay brothers' refectory - where the lay brothers ate, the guest house - for the abbey to accept visitors and the gate house - to control access to the precinct. The early buildings would have been of sophisticated wood, wattle and daub, and thatch construction, as they would have needed to endure for many years, often decades, until they could be replaced with stone constructions. Evidence at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire shows principal wall posts 0.4m square, walls of straight alignment, sill beams for stability, with indication that some buildings had two storeys. Temporary buildings were not cloistered as they were only intended for use until such time as the monastery was stable, and in a position to construct permanent buildings in stone.

Immediately after the founding community arrived, the water management system would be cut. This consisted of water channels bringing freshwater in to, and taking wastewater from, the abbey, water channels that would serve the buildings, settling tanks to filter the water and balancing reservoirs to control the flow pressure throughout the system in order that water-powered machinery would turn, and waste could be carried away. Indeed, the Cistercian expertise in hydraulic engineering was such that other religious orders often sought their advice. Other immediate constructions would be the precinct boundary (in the form of a ditch, a fence or both) in order to separate the community from the outside world, and the necessary workplaces such as bakehouse, brewhouse, smithy and washhouse.

Permanent Precinct

General

The abbey precinct, also referred to as the inner court, contained the cloistral complex, infirmaries, guest houses, the necessary workplaces (bakehouse, brewhouse, smithy, etc), the areas for husbandry and produce, and, later, the abbot's lodgings, the *misericord* and tied housing (when provided). Before construction of the cloistral complex and other buildings of the precinct in stone began, the water management system that would serve those buildings was first laid out and incorporated into the existing water management system. The permanent water channels were stone lined in order to ensure the reliable water source that was essential to service the kitchens, latrines, *lavabo*, and liturgical practices.

The cloistral complex was the heart of the abbey and the hub of abbey life. The absolute heart of the cloister was the garth which, as a contemplative area, was considered to be a haven of tranquillity, a heavenly paradise. Cloisters in northwest Europe were typically south-facing; with the Church forming the north face with the east range abutted to, and extending from, the south edge of the transept, and the west range abutted to, and extending from, the west end of the nave, and both ranges enclosed by the south range. This was particularly so in England and Wales with sixty of the seventy-nine abbeys having south-facing cloisters; of the remaining nineteen, fourteen were north-facing and five were unknown due to the lack of physical or documentary evidence. Those that were north-facing were generally so due to geographical and water source influences.

The average time to complete a stone church was twenty years and to complete the remainder of the cloistral complex forty years. However, this could vary considerably depending on the generosity and interest of patrons, availability of resources and workforce, and the scale of construction. Stone buildings were vaulted on the ground floor and, although generally vaulted on the upper floor, some upper floors were timber framed. Monastic buildings were ritually purified on a weekly basis by the sprinkling of holy water in order to eliminate the 'bad air' that caused illness; particularly the church, chapter house, *calefactory*, dormitory, latrines, refectory, kitchen and storerooms.

One activity commonly associated with any monastic establishment was the copying of records. The space in which this occurred was the *scriptorium*, however, unlike other monastic orders, the *scriptorium* did not occupy a fixed space in Cistercian abbeys; rather, a *scriptorium* would be set up when it was required in a place in the abbey that afforded the best conditions for such work - principally, good natural light and easy access to the necessary equipment.

When circulating around the abbey, monks, novices and lay brothers would keep close to the walls leaving the middle of the passages and corridors free for the abbot. Items that savoured pride and excess, or that corrupted poverty, were forbidden within the abbey precinct.

Boundary

The precinct was enclosed by a boundary, often a stone wall, that served as both a physical and symbolic barrier between the secular world outside and the spiritual world of the community within. At Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, the wall was of stone and, on average, 11 feet (3.4 metres) in height, enclosing an area of 70 acres (28.3 hectares). As a comparison, the precinct at Rievaulx Abbey, in Yorkshire, was an enclosed area of 92 acres (37.2 hectares), whilst the average enclosed area for an English or Welsh precinct measured just 25 acres (10.1 hectares). The Sawtry Abbey precinct reportedly consisted of an enclosed area measuring only 15 acres (6 hectares).

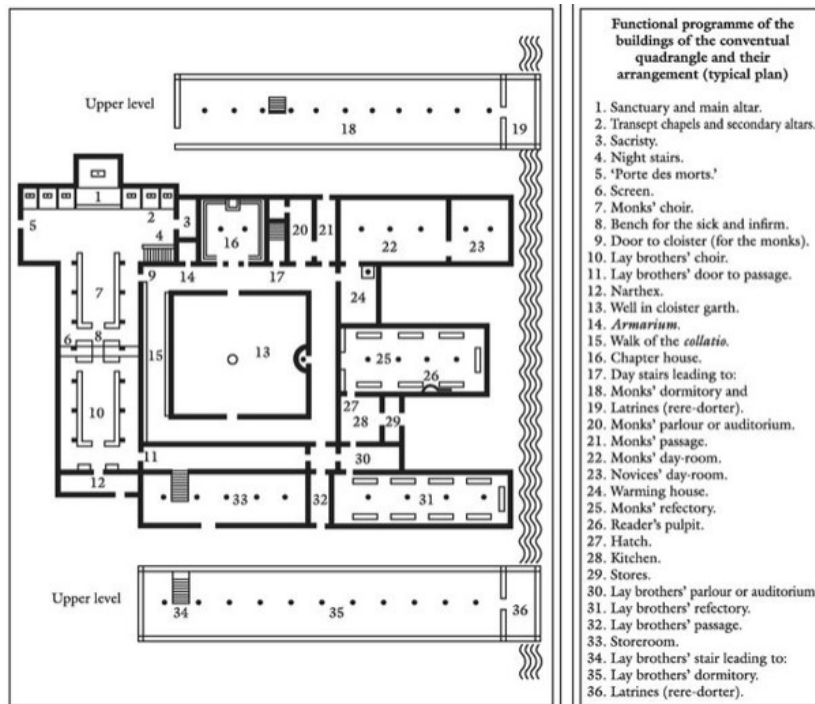
Gatehouse

The principal means of entry to and exit from the abbey was by the gatehouse located in the west wall of the precinct. The gatehouse was the domain of the porter who controlled entrance to the abbey. The porter slept in the gatehouse but took his meals in the refectory. He was also the almoner, giving out alms and remains of the abbey's meals to the poor who regularly gathered there. The gatehouse was typically of two-stories, with accommodation for the porter, and vaulted entrances for pedestrians, carts and mounted travellers.

It was common for gatehouses to have a gatehouse chapel (*capella ad portas*) either incorporated in the outer face or as an annexed building. At other abbeys, including Sawtry, the gatehouse chapel was a nearby pre-existing parish church. The *capella ad portas* of Sawtry Abbey was the Sawtry Judith parish church of St Mary, located some 400m west of the gatehouse. Gatehouse chapels were used by those who were unable to gain access to the precinct to hear sermons, and at some abbeys they were used for lay burials, whilst at others they were destinations of pilgrimage.

Cloister

The cloister was the heart of the abbey that gave the monks access to the buildings that were central to their lives; the church, the sacristy, the library, the chapterhouse, the parlour, the dormitory, the refectory and the kitchen. As a typical cloister in northwest Europe,



A typical Cistercian south-facing cloister, shown in the medieval manner with east at the top of the page (Jean-Francois Leroux-Dhuys, *Cistercian Abbeys: History and Architecture*, Cologne: Könemann, 1998, p.52 in Jamroziak, 2013)

particularly in England and Wales, was south-facing (as at Sawtry Abbey), it is this orientation that is the basis of reference throughout this article. The cloister was formed by the church on the north side, the east and south ranges, and a west wall that separated the west range from the garth. Along the internal faces of the Church, the two ranges and the west wall were covered arcades (or walkways) approximately 3-4 metres in width which bounded a central garden (the garth). The width of the arcades allowed them to serve a multitude of purposes other than as ambulatories. They provided space for manual work and domestic activities (such as the washing and mending of clothes, shaving and haircutting), whilst specific areas were reserved for reading, studying and personal meditation. In the northeast corner by the monks' door leading into the church was a *tabula* (a wooden board covered in wax) on which notices and announcements were written relating to matters of the day.

The cloistral garth was a garden that was maintained 'pleasing to the eye'. It was originally square, but, following the demise of the lay-brothers, was often elongated by removing the west wall and repositioning the west arcade along the internal face of the west range; the north and south arcades being extended to connect with the newly positioned west arcade, creating a rectangular garth. The garth was also a functional space in which manuscripts were dried, and where monks could also be shaved, and mend their clothing (at Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire a thimble and cotton buttons were recovered during archaeological excavation of the cloistral garth). It also contained a well or fountain (*lavabo*) positioned off the south arcade opposite the refectory. Water was delivered and removed by pipes running under the garth and could either be a continuous flow or managed on demand. The *lavabo* was both symbolic and practical, as the washing of hands was a liturgical requirement and essential before eating meals, and could be open or enclosed. Through time the *lavabo* was often replaced by a long basin or series of smaller basins attached to the refectory wall by the refectory door in the south arcade. There is geophysical evidence that supports Inskip Ladds drawing which depicts a *lavabo* in the southwest of the garth at Sawtry Abbey.

Church

The church was the highest and most prestigious building of the abbey and was central to monastic life and the choir monks' service to God. They were typically cruciform in plan (as seen in Leroux-Dhuys' drawing) with unstressed crossings, a short square-ended presbytery to house the altar, and small rectangular transept chapels. All Cistercian abbey churches were dedicated to St. Mary and their liturgical significance was graduated in importance from east to west; the presbytery, the transept with crossing, the nave with north and south aisles and the west doors covered by the narthex (or galilee porch).

At the east end of the church, the presbytery was the most important space. Located within was the high altar which sat on a raised platform several steps higher than the floor of the nave and transepts. A single crucifix of painted wood stood on the high altar, suspended over it was a *pix* containing the Holy Sacrament in linen cloths, with a lamp burning both day and night before it.

The transept separated the presbytery and nave. The north and south transepts formed the 'arms' of the cruciform plan, and in the centre, between the presbytery and nave, was the crossing. The east wall of each transept arm contained chapels; of which Sawtry Abbey had two in each transept arm. Transept chapels contained altars of wood that were set in the mortar floor. In the southwest corner of the south transept were night stairs that lead to the monks' dormitory and in the north wall of the north transept was the *port des morts* (door of the dead) that lead to the cemetery; this door was used for no other purpose than to convey a dead monk for burial.

The nave was divided into three choirs. The east choir adjoining, and often extending into, the crossing was for the choir monks, in which their stalls (seats) were located; each monk had his own stall positioned by seniority within the community. Stalls were inward facing with the abbot's stall at the presbytery end of the south stalls and the prior's stall at the presbytery end of the north stalls. Stalls were wooden and decorated with intricate carvings according to monastic style of the times, with the abbot's being more prominent than those of the other choir monks. In front of the stalls was space for the novices who knelt on the ground or sat on low seats. The monks' choir also contained a portable lectern that held a large copy of the antiphony of chants. The central, or retro, choir was for the elderly monks and those infirm monks who were able enough to leave the infirmary. The central choir also contained a lectern, on which was a copy of the Psalter. During services, novices would move to the central choir in order to chant from the Psalter. Between the retro choir and choir was the *pulpitum* and two chapels; the one in the north aisle was dedicated to St. Mary, the one in the south aisle being dedicated to St. Bernard. The west choir was the lay brothers' choir, which was firmly divided from the monks' choirs by a fixed timber (occasionally stone) rood screen that contained an interconnecting central opening. The rood screen prevented the lay-brothers from being seen by the choir monks, and from seeing the celebration of mass; but permitted them to hear and participate as prescribed by Cistercian statutes. Lay brothers entered their choir through a door in the southwest corner of the nave. At the west end of the nave was the narthex or galilee porch where permitted lay people were allowed to listen to, and participate (as permitted), in mass.

In the mid- to late-fourteenth century there was a decline of lay brother numbers which led to an opening up of naves. In most cases, as the north and south aisles were no longer required as through-passages, chapels were installed in them, whilst in some instances organ lofts were installed.

At first, only small timber bell towers were permitted, however, due to the impracticality of these structures under certain prevalent weather and geographical conditions, modest stone bell towers were eventually permitted. Crossing towers were lanterns to light the choir at the

heart of the church; natural light had great significance as it was considered to be a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The late fifteenth century saw an introduction of bell towers over the west end of the nave and over the narthex at a number of northern abbeys. Uncommonly, at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire an immense bell tower was constructed at the north end of the north transept.

In 1147, the General Chapter stipulated that plain green glass set in grisailles windows only were permitted, however, by the late fifteenth century principal windows began to be replaced with coloured, pictorial, glass. The early churches had earthen floors except in the important areas of the presbytery, transept chapels and monks' choir, which had mortared floors. As time progressed, church floors were fully mortared, with important areas in slab paving which, subsequently, were later replaced by tiled flooring.

No crucifixes or crosses of gold or silver were allowed in Cistercian churches. One candlestick of plain iron only was to be used to light up the church; censers were to be of brass; chasubles of plain material; albs and amices of linen; copes, tunics and dalmatics were expressly forbidden; chalices and the pipe through which the blessed Blood of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist was received were to be of silver gilt only; no pictures or sculptures were permitted. Only on special occasions were guests permitted in the church; a rule that was to be relaxed in the later centuries.

East Range

The east range was immediately south of and adjacent to the transept. It consisted of, on the ground floor from north to south, the sacristy (accessed from within the church) and the *armarium* (accessed from the east arcade), the chapterhouse, day stairs to the monks' dormitory, monks' parlour (*auditorium*), monks' passage to the east precinct, monks' day-room and novices' day-room. The first floor consisted primarily of the monks' dormitory and the monks' *rere-dorter* (latrines) at the south end or as an adjoined annex of the south end. There were a set of day stairs that exited into the cloister and night stairs that exited in the south transept.

The sacristy was on the ground floor between the church and the chapter house, on the east side of the range, and was the responsibility of the sacristan. It was accessed from the south transept and functioned as secure storage for the liturgical vessels, vestments, and books used during mass and canonical offices.

The *armarium* (library) was on the ground floor between the church and the chapterhouse, on the west side of the range. In large abbeys with extensive collections of books the *armarium* was the responsibility of a dedicated librarian, otherwise it was the responsibility of the cantor. The *armarium* contained the books of the abbey, including the mandatory collection of liturgical books - the Missal, the Bible, the Epistolary, the Collectarium, the Gradual, the Antiphonary, the Rule of Benedict, the Hymnary, the Psalter, the Lectionary and the Calendar. The normal manner by which collections were added to was through borrowing a book, manuscript or chronicle from the mother or a sister-house in order that it could be copied in the *scriptorium*, after which it was returned to the donor abbey. The *armarium* consisted predominantly of works on theology although it was not uncommon for them to also contain a small number of works on topics such as grammar, logic, philosophy, law, classics, science, medicine and history. Manuscripts of value were often chained to prevent theft and their use was only permitted under the strictest of supervision. Works were in Latin only until the late thirteenth century when, in a limited quantity at first, they began to be translated into the local vernacular; a process that gained momentum in later centuries.

The chapterhouse was on the ground floor of the east range, immediately south of the sacristy and *armarium*. It was the second most important space in the abbey, and its

centrality in the life of the monastic community was highlighted by it being the common burial place of abbots whose tomb slabs formed the floor surface. The chapterhouse was also where confession was heard by the abbot. Immediately south of the chapterhouse were the day stairs that led to the monks' dormitory.

The *auditorium* (parlour) was on the ground floor of the east range, immediately south of the chapterhouse. *Auditorium* was a very precise term as this was a space for listening, rather than conversing. If a monk wished to speak with the abbot or prior, he made this known when they were in the auditorium. Similarly, if the abbot or prior wished to speak with a monk, he was called to the *auditorium*. The monk would say only what was necessary and listened to the guidance of the abbot or prior.

Immediately south of the *auditorium* on the ground floor was the monks' passage that led to the east precinct, and immediately south of that on the ground floor was the monks' day-room, with the novices' day-room at the extreme end of the east range ground floor.

The choir monks' dormitory occupied much of the first floor of the east range which was accessed by both night and day stairs. This was the large communal sleeping area for the monks, in which a lamp burned throughout the night. Although abbots at first slept in the dormitory with the monks, a cell was later installed at the top of the night stairs for the abbot, that had a window overlooking the cloister; in later centuries abbots ceased sleeping in the dormitory when separate lodges were introduced for their sole use. Also at the north end of the dormitory was a strong-room for valuables, archives, and other important documents not kept in the sacristy. The sacristan also slept at the north end of the dormitory, adjacent to the bell pull. Other than the abbot's cell and the strong-room, there were no other cells or bedspace divisions. Each monk had a cot and a stool. Monks were not permitted to shake out their clothes in the dormitory, and they were expected to change their clothes without showing any nakedness. The early thirteenth century saw a marked loss of Cistercian characteristics and softening of ideals. From the fourteenth century, with a decline in numbers of choir monks, the dormitory in some abbeys was divided into smaller personal cells.

At the south end, or annexed to the south end, of the dormitory was the *rere-dorter* (latrines), under which ran a flowing water channel. *Rere-dorter* were not closed-off or otherwise screened from the dormitory and monks were expected to remain covered whilst 'using the facility'. *Rere-dorter* were regularly flushed with water to minimize the risk of disease.

South Range

The south range originally consisted of, from east to west, the *calefactorium* (warming room) and the monks' refectory. The refectory was aligned parallel with the range but from around 1170 the refectory was re-aligned perpendicular to the range which allowed for a larger refectory with a greater abundance of natural light. Re-alignment of the monks' refectory allowed the kitchen to be incorporated into the south range from the west range. Above the *calefactorium* was the muniment room

The *calefactorium* was located at the east end of the south range on the ground floor. It was the only space in the cloister, other than the kitchen, where heating was permitted. Typically heating was by open hearth fires, however, over time open hearths were replaced by more efficient fireplaces; and in some abbeys heating was further improved by *hypocaustum* (under-floor heating). When taking warmth monks were not to stay more than fifteen minutes, they were to remain standing, they were not to turn their back to the fire, and they were not to remove their shoes. Those who could enter, other than when permitted to take warmth, were the sacristan and the thurifer to get fire, and monks when instructed to carry out certain work within. The *calefactorium* was often multi-purposed as a *scriptorium*, a

work-room for greasing shoes and for blood-letting (this could include lay brothers at the abbot's discretion); however, access was not permitted during reading time. In later years, as heating was introduced in other functional spaces of the abbey, the need for a bespoke warming-room declined, and the *calefactorium* became another communal space. To the south of the *calefactorium* was a yard that contained a wood store for the fires. Above the *calefactorium* was a muniment room (dry and fire-proof) that was used for safe housing the abbey's deeds and estate papers.

The monks' refectory was located immediately west of the *calefactorium* on the ground floor of the south range. It was originally on an east/west alignment, parallel with the south arcade, but from 1170 it was common for existing refectories to be rebuilt on a north/south alignment, and for new refectories to be similarly built, to allow for expansion and to make greater use of natural light. The monks' refectory stood third most in importance of spiritual significance to the abbey. The tables were arranged around the walls with the monks seated facing inwards. The west wall contained a protruding raised reader's pulpit with access via stairs built within the thickness of the wall, where a monk, selected on a weekly basis, read from the Bible; other than the reading, meals were taken in silence. Those who could enter the monks' refectory outside of mealtimes were the cooks, the refectorian and those he called in to help, the infirmarian and the sacristan (to fetch the salt).

The kitchen, following realignment of the monks' refectory, was located on the ground floor at the west end of the south range, which served both the monks' and lay brothers' refectories. There were two types of kitchen, one with an open fire against a wall and the other an open fire in the middle of the kitchen. The kitchen had a vaulted roof to protect the timber roof above. Those who could enter were the two monks selected to work as cooks on a weekly basis, paid servants whose sole task was to assist the cooks, those who the cooks called in for help, the infirmarian, the cantor and copyists to smooth out parchment and melt ink, the sacristan and thurifer to get light (but not if there was a fire in the *calefactorium*) or salt to be blessed, the circators and (when abbot's lodgings existed) the abbot's cook. To the south of the kitchen was a yard containing a wood store for the kitchen fire.

West Range

The west range consisted of, on the ground floor from north to south, the *cellarium* (cellarage), the lay brothers' passage (also known as the cellarer's parlour) and the lay brothers refectory. It was one of the many buildings collectively known as the 'cellarer's domain'. Before the kitchen was relocated to the south range it would have been located between the lay brothers' passage and the lay brothers' refectory. The first floor consisted primarily of the lay brothers' dormitory and the lay brothers' *rere-dorter* (latrines) at the south end or as an adjoined annex of the south end. There were a set of day stairs that exited through the cellarage on to the *ruelle des convers* (lay brothers lane) which separated the west range from the west arcade wall of the cloistral garth. The west range was connected to the south range and, ordinarily, the west end of the church (although at some abbeys the church nave did not extend the full length of the north arcade).

The *cellarium* took up the entire ground floor of the west range, north of the lay brothers' passage and was used for storing the abbey's provisions.

The lay brothers' passage, as mentioned above, was also known as the cellarer's parlour and was where the cellarer conducted business transactions with merchants and other visitors. It was here also that the cellarer spoke with the lay brothers and assigned their tasks. The passage was located more-or-less centrally on the ground floor of the west range, between the *cellarium* and the lay brothers' refectory, and (generally) had opposing doors in both the west and east walls that were aligned with the cloistral south arcade; the

west door serving as the main entrance for visitors and the east door giving access to the cloister.

The remainder of the ground floor of the west range south of the lay brothers' passage consisted of the lay brothers' refectory. Similar to the monks' refectory, the tables were arranged around the walls with the lay brothers seated facing inwards and meals taken in silence. However, there was no pulpit and there was no reading during meals. The lay brothers' refectory was also used for their own weekly chapter on Sunday (except certain feast days when lay brothers attended chapter in the monks' chapterhouse) and commonly presided over by the master of lay brothers, and for the blood-letting of lay brothers if not carried out in the *calefactorium*. Those who could enter the lay brothers' refectory outside of mealtimes and blood-letting were the cooks, and the master of lay brothers and those he called in to help. Relocation of the kitchen allowed for enlargement of the lay brother's refectory.

The lay brothers' dormitory occupied much of the first floor of the west range which was accessed by day stairs that emerged through the *cellarium* into the *ruelle des convers*; some abbeys reportedly also had night stairs leading from the lay brothers' dormitory directly into the nave. This was the large communal sleeping area for the lay brothers'. The longest recorded lay brothers' dormitory in England and Wales is at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, which could accommodate up to four hundred lay brothers.

At the south end, or annexed to the south end, of the dormitory was the *rere-dorter* (latrines), under which ran a flowing water channel. The *rere-dorter* were regularly flushed with water to minimize the risk of disease.

Between the west range and the west arcade wall was the *ruelle des convers* (lay brothers' alley) that gave the lay brothers' their access to the west end of the church nave. The south end of the *ruelle des convers*, between the kitchen and the lay brothers' refectory was enclosed and served as the lay brothers' parlour.

Following the disappearance of lay-brothers from Cistercian monastic communities, their dormitory and refectory were often converted to meet a variety of other uses, such as abbatial suites, libraries and winter refectories. The dividing wall between the west arcade and the *ruelle des convers* was also removed, and the west range directly incorporated into the cloistral garth by repositioning the west arcade adjacent to the west range and extending the north and south arcades to connect with the newly positioned west arcade; resulting in a rectangular east/west garth.

Monks' Infirmary

The choir monks' infirmary was, typically, a separate cloistered complex located east of the east range and close to the cemetery in the east precinct. The walkway that led to the infirmary entrance was accessed from the east arcade through the monks' passage. The monks' infirmary was more comfortable (by Cistercian standards) than the dormitory as it was more spacious, had heating, more comfortable beds, had a ready supply of fresh water, baths for therapeutic treatments and was, generally, a more relaxed regime (again by Cistercian standards). The infirmary complex included its own chapel, kitchen, *rere-dorter* block and an aisled hall that were ranged around a central garth in likeness of the main cloister. The infirmary housed those monks who were too ill or weak to participate in the routine of daily liturgy, in order that they could recover and return to their spiritual obligations. Although the infirm and those who cared for them followed the monastic routine as much as possible, the rule of silence was less strict. However, no one could be admitted to the infirmary without permission of the infirmarian.

A chapel at the east end of the monks' infirmary hall allowed those too sick to attend church to participate in, or at least hear, mass. It was believed that recovery was a result of liturgical intervention as much as medical treatment. Being able to see the elevation of the host was also considered to be helpful to recovery, as well as easing the passing to paradise for a dying monk.

As the numbers of choir monks continued to decline in the later centuries, the focus of monastic life shifted from the main cloister to the smaller cloistered monks' infirmary.

Lay Brothers' Infirmary

The lay brothers' infirmary was generally located west of the west range in the west precinct. However, at some abbeys it was south of (as at Roche Abbey in Yorkshire) or south-west of (as at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire and Waverley Abbey in Surrey) the west range. It was typically an aisled hall, rather than a cloistered complex and, like the choir monks' infirmary, had its own kitchen. The infirmary housed those lay brothers who were too ill or weak to work, in order that they could recover and return to their manual labours. The lay brothers' infirmary was the responsibility of the *magister infirmarius* who generally had one assistant and, again, none were admitted without his permission.

Guest House(s)

The guest house, or guest houses - depending on the size of the abbey, were located west of the west range in the west precinct, near to the gatehouse in order to reduce disruption to the monastic community. They were generally two storeys, with the upper floor suites to a high standard than those on the ground floor, and included a kitchen, refectory, dormitory and infirmary. They were the responsibility of the guest master who was assisted by a lay brother; in some instances, as at Ford Abbey in Dorset and Melrose Abbey in Roxburghshire, the guest master himself was a lay brother. The guest master was permitted to speak with all guests (the lay brother assistant was not) and to his assistant. All guests were received as though they were Christ, although the hospitality given was accorded by their status; those who arrived on horseback were kept separate from those who arrived on foot. Guests were expected to pray separately from the monastic community, either in the gatehouse chapel or in the galilee porch at the west door of the church.

Workplaces

Workplaces within the precinct, such as barns, stables, workshops, kiln, mill, forge, tannery, piggery, brewhouse, bakehouse, and washhouse, were commonly located in the west precinct west of the west range.

Husbandry and Produce

Spaces dedicated to husbandry and produce such as dovecots, fish stews, bee-hives, the cartilage (kitchen garden), orchards, and vineyards were established at suitable and practical locations elsewhere in the precinct. It is recorded that there was a rabbit warren at Sawtry Abbey.

Abbot's Lodges

From the mid-twelfth century, abbots had increasing status and responsibility beyond that of the head of a monastic community, as owners of estates and holding of associated feudal title. As a reflection of this increased status and responsibility, and to accommodate the staff of the abbots' household and secretariat that had become a necessity, abbots' lodges were established; at first within the infirmary complex, then latterly as separate complexes in their

own right - although remaining in the east precinct east of the east range. From the fourteenth century, abbots' lodges were increased substantially in size and comfort to match a further elevation in status. Following the demise of the lay brothers some abbeys converted their lay brothers' dormitory as abbots' lodges.

Abbots' lodges were of an appropriate ambience for the accommodation and entertainment of particularly important guests and, therefore, had its own kitchen which served richer food than the abbey kitchen or guest house; although fasting principles on prescribed days were adhered to. Consequently, the abbot no longer ate with the choir monks in their refectory, but ate in his lodge with his guests. If there were no guests, two choir monks were invited to eat with the abbot. The abbot's lodge incorporated greater architectural and stylistic detail than the other monastic buildings, with larger windows, fireplaces and more modern fittings.

Misericord

In 1439 a special regulation was introduced by the General Chapter that permitted the eating of meat. As meat was not to be eaten in the refectory (under any circumstance) a special room, the *misericord*, was reserved for the eating of meat. These were often established near, adjacent or within the infirmary, as meat had always been provided for the inmates of the infirmary.

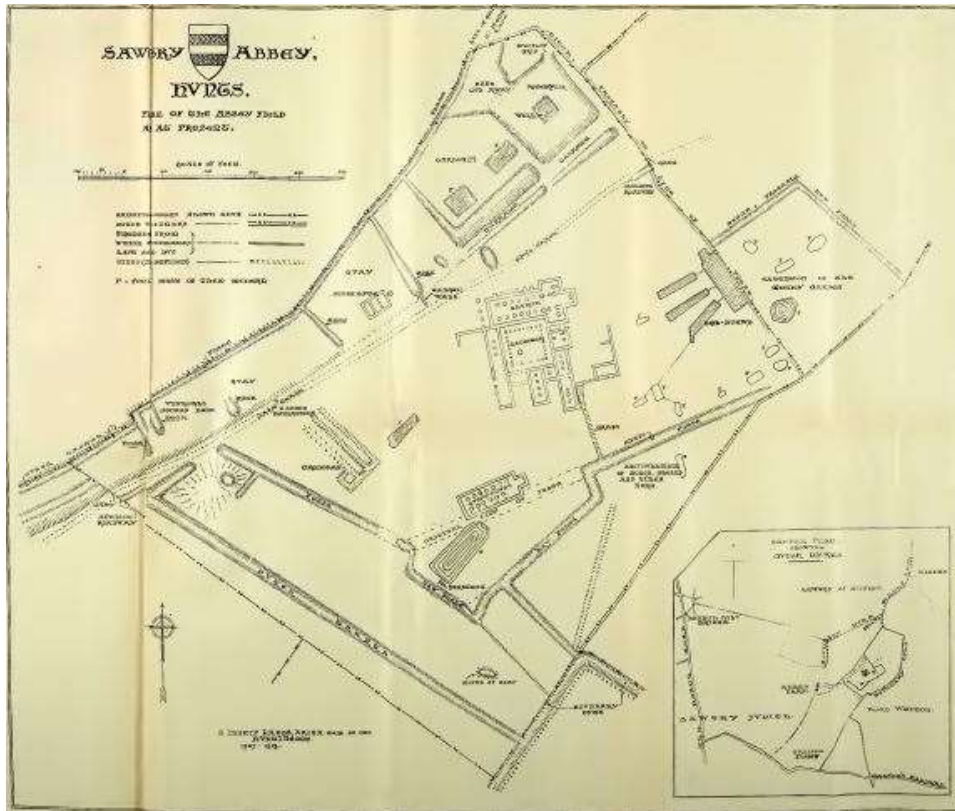
Tied Housing

In larger abbeys, when not provided in the outer court or on a home grange, tied housing was established within the precinct for the accommodation of hired help, retired tenants and senior servants.

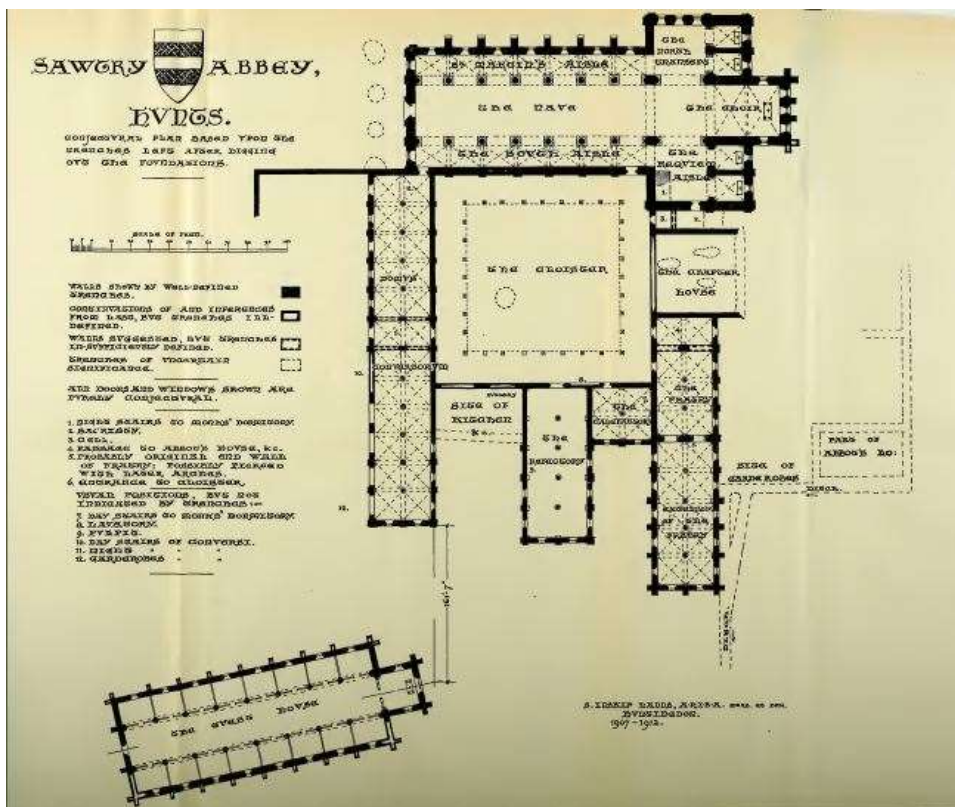
Architecture

Early rules prohibited the adornment of colour and fabrics in abbey buildings, there were no stained glass, carpets, wall-hangings or paintings. Ashlar walls were lime-washed white with mock masonry lines picked out in light grey paint, whilst non-ashlar walls were plastered over the rubble-stone finish, then white-limed (buff-limed from mid thirteenth century) and lined with light grey paint to represent an ashlar finish. Window glazing was clear with a greenish hue, the preference being for natural light rather than artificial light - partly for financial reasons and partly for the spiritual significance that evoked Christ who was the Light of the World. In later centuries regulations were relaxed, coloured glass was gradually introduced, and vessels, ornaments, paintings and sculptures were slowly permitted.

Architectural styles differed greatly from abbey to abbey, even within the same filiation, in a reflection of neighbouring and local influences - but in a manner that remained uniquely Cistercian, in keeping with the principals of the Order. Cistercian architecture changed with the times, it embraced new ideas, adopted local practices and traditional methods, and utilized local materials. Architectural individuality was further enhanced by the incorporation of the heraldic devices of patrons, benefactors and abbots as motifs on walls or floor tiles.



Interpretive drawing of Sawtry Abbey precinct and surrounding environs (Inskip Ladds, S. 1914. 'Sawtry Abbey, Huntingdonshire', *Transactions of the Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society*, 3(9), pp. 339-374)



Interpretive drawing of Sawtry Abbey cloister and guest house (Inskip Ladds, S. 1913. 'Sawtry Abbey, Huntingdonshire', *Transactions of the Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society*, 3(8), pp. 295-322)

Notes

Abbot - head of the abbey and father of the monastic community

Prior - eye and hand of the abbot; deputized for the abbot in his absence

Cantor - responsible for the choir books and copying of manuscripts

Cellarer - managed the economy of the abbey; supervised the lay brothers, hire labour and home grange(s)

Circator - a deputy of the prior, he made rounds of the abbey and reporting to the prior anything amiss

Copyists - worked in the *scriptorium*, copied books, records and manuscripts

Guest Master - looked after visitors, ensuring they were properly received

Infirmarian - cared for the sick and elderly choir monks of the abbey

Librarian - in larger abbeys only, looked after extensive collections of books

Magister Infirmarius - cared for the sick and elderly lay brothers of the abbey

Master of Lay Brothers - assisted the cellarer in training novice lay brothers and in the visiting of granges

Refectorian - responsible for the choir monks refectory

Sacristan - time-keeper for the abbey and, in smaller abbeys with no librarian, looked after the library

Thurifer - carries the thurible, or censer, during church services

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